



It's a Bats Life

You may have gotten the impression that the Las Vegas Strip is the only place to be for night life, but there is plenty of activity at Red Rock Canyon after sunset too! While we enjoy the cool of air conditioning during the long summer days, wildlife seeks out cooler spots underground, in rock shelters and under the cover of shade by trees and canyon walls. For many visitors the desert seems lifeless, and chances are if you visit Red Rock Canyon in the middle of the day during the summer you are unlikely to see anything moving at all except cars on the scenic drive!

Its easy to lose a true sense of the summer, with air conditioning blowing in our faces and clean refreshing water from the tap. For the plants at Red Rock Canyon, most of them take the summer off by going into dormancy. Life is considerably more difficult for animals though. To cope with the summer heat, most desert dwellers get through it all by modifying their activity period to night time hours. Some inhabitants, such as bats are exclusively nocturnal, being active from sunset to sunrise only. Other nocturnal animals found at Red Rock Canyon include owls and kangaroo rats. Even snakes and desert tortoise become mostly nocturnal during the summer.

Red Rock Canyon has 12 species of bats that inhabit the area during the summer, although they head south for warmer climates during the winter time. Over the years, many myths and superstitions have developed about



Pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus) eating a scorpion
photo courtesy Merlin D. Turtle of
Bat Conservation International

bats. For many people, superstitions have far overshadowed the actual importance and benefits of bats. Here are just a few of some of the misunderstandings about bats (and the actual truths!):

- ☐ most bats are not blind and are unlikely to get caught in your hair;
- ☐ of the 1,000 species of bats worldwide, only three feed on the blood of warm blooded animals, none of which are found in the U.S.;
- ☐ while bats can carry the rabies virus, few do and you are more likely to be infected from a dog or cat than a bat;
- ☐ 70% of bats, and all those found at Red Rock Canyon are *insectivorous*, serving as extremely important controls of insect pests including mosquitos!

To increase visitor's appreciation of bats, Red Rock Canyon is sponsoring evening walks on the natural history of bats. If you would like to see and hear live bats, join us for one of these evening programs.

"An Evening Walk with Bats" meets at the visitor center for a slide program on bats and then takes a very short/easy walk where echo locaters are used to listen to bats flying around/feeding at a spring. Not suitable for very young children. Reservations are needed by calling: 702-515-5367.



Hoary bat (Lasiurus cinerus)
photo courtesy Merlin D. Turtle of
Bat Conservation International

Harvest Festival

Saturday October 11, 2003 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Coming soon is Red Rock Canyon's 9th Annual Harvest Festival. Held since 1995, this special event attracts about 3,000 people each year and is sponsored by the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.



Smokey the Bear



Woodsy Owl

The festival includes exhibitors, crafts and dance performances by a Native American group. Special guest appearances are made by Smokey the Bear, Woodsy Owl, and our own mascot, Mojave Max. We hope to see you here for the Festival!



Mojave Max

all photographs by Brian L. Buttazoni